



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 07 2011

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I have signed Senate Bill 202. This bill makes two important and practical changes to existing law.

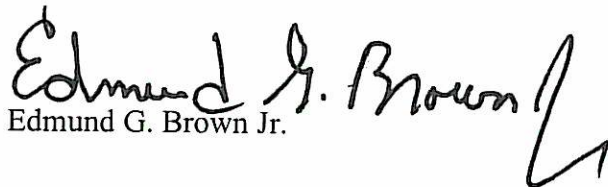
First, this measure restores the original understanding of constitutional law that initiatives were to be considered at a general election or at a special election called for critical questions requiring swift resolution by the people. This was the historic practice for more than fifty years. It was not until 1970 that initiatives were first placed on a primary ballot and that practice has continued ever since, including twice when I was the Secretary of State.

The backers of this measure point out that there are dramatically more voters at a general rather than a primary election. In 2010, for example, only 5.7 million people voted in the primary compared to 10.3 million in the general election -- a pattern that has held true over time. The idea of direct democracy is to involve as many voters as possible. This bill accomplishes that objective.

Second, this law moves the date when voters will be asked to approve changes to the state's rainy-day fund. These changes, combined with today's historically low revenues caused by the recession, would divert billions of dollars into a reserve fund while the state still has a structural budget deficit. The result would be to abruptly increase California's budget shortfall and drive massive additional cuts to education and public safety.

There's no question that setting aside reserves for a rainy day is prudent. But families can't put money into a savings account when they can't pay their bills and neither should the state. This needed reform must wait until we have recovered from the current recession and securely balanced our budget.

Sincerely,


Edmund G. Brown Jr.